

THI

State of the Art

How to improve intercultural communication?



Table of Contents




















































Introduction to intercultural communication

Experiences other companies

How information is conveyed and perceived

Summary and recommendations to improve intercultural communication

An international matrix organisation with German roots

Business unit	South America	Greater China	Germany	IMEA	Asia Pacific	North America
A 						
B 						
C 						
D 						
E 						
F 						
G 						

Be aware and unveil the hidden aspects of cultural diversity



Cultural Iceberg Model

visible culture (perceived)

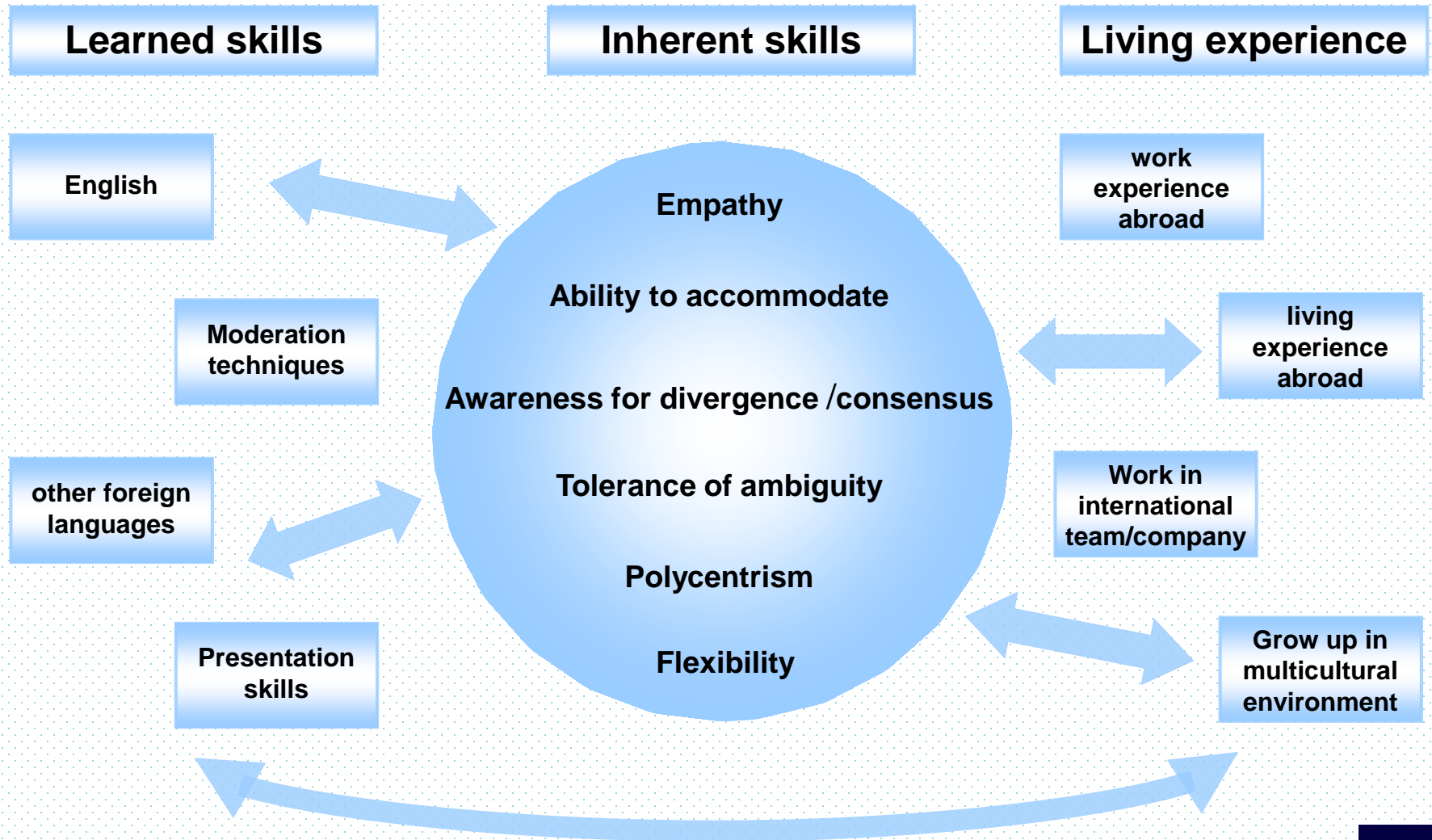
language, customs, habits, dress code,
music, literature, gestures etc.

hidden culture

norms and values:

- perception of time, space, justice, power, threats
- approach to conflicts
- emotions, passion, sympathy, antipathy
- idea of logic, friendship, truth, freedom, honour
- importance of work, individualism, justice, wealth

What determines our intercultural competence?



Culture deeply influences the way we communicate

Form of Communication	Brasil	China	Germany	India	Japan	USA
Appearance / face to face	very informal	formal	formal	formal	reserved	informal
Telephone	talk around	initiation of contact	straight	initiation of contact	talk around	1st small talk/ then straight
Body language	prominent	reserved	reserved	expressive	impassive	friendliness/ expressive
Presentation	interactive / entertaining	to the point	to the point/ fact driven	entertaining / indirect	indirect/ interpretative	interactive/ to the point
Text document	informal / to the point	more positive	to the point	indirect/ extensive	very detailed	structured/ to the point
Email	informal / to the point	short / non-binding	short/formal	extensive/ formal	extremely formal	short/informal/ aware of tone?

+ What works well today?

Building up international relationships works well because general **awareness for cultural divergence** is given

International communication works the better the **closer** the **cultures** are

To increasing number of **international workshops & management meetings** established to promote international communication and exchange of ideas/experiences

Steadily increasing contents of (mostly) multi-lingual internal **communication media** balances well local and international topics and is well received by employees around the globe to enhance knowledge

High **readiness to** make **compromises** when topic is looked at from different angle

– Where is room for improvement?

At times limited **commandment of English** leads in written communication to misunderstandings/conflicts among non-native speakers

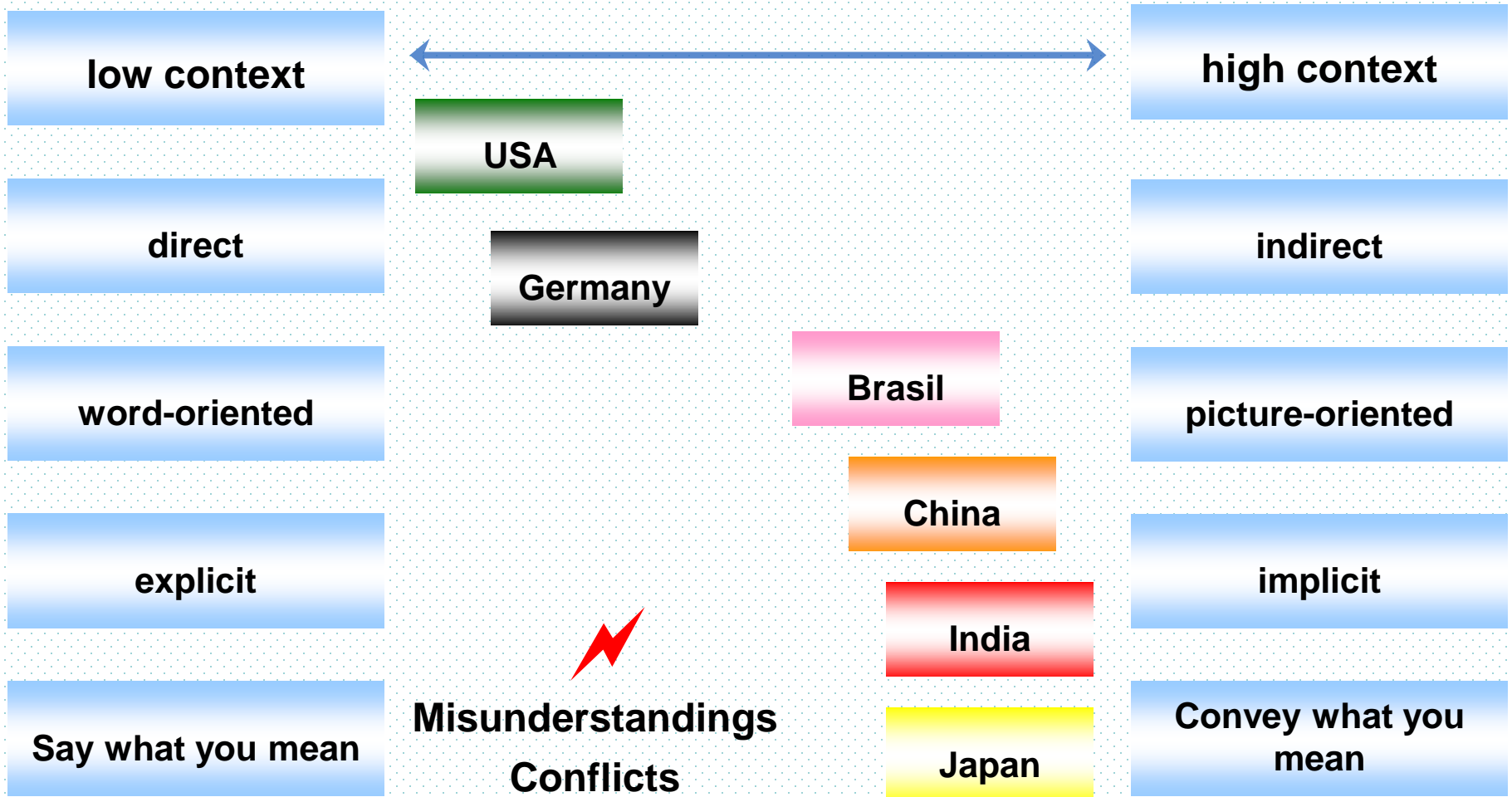
At times leaders of international projects (esp. Germans) miss **awareness for cultural peculiarities** before starting assignments

Often colleagues from subsidiaries outside Germany are hesitant or reluctant to take an **active part in** an international **project** particularly when coming from a high context culture because they expect that head office sets the rules

Often **tedious coordination processes** due to open communication culture

A organization as a whole not yet well prepared to **implement** large international **projects** by proven skill box/methodology

How do you convey and perceive a message?

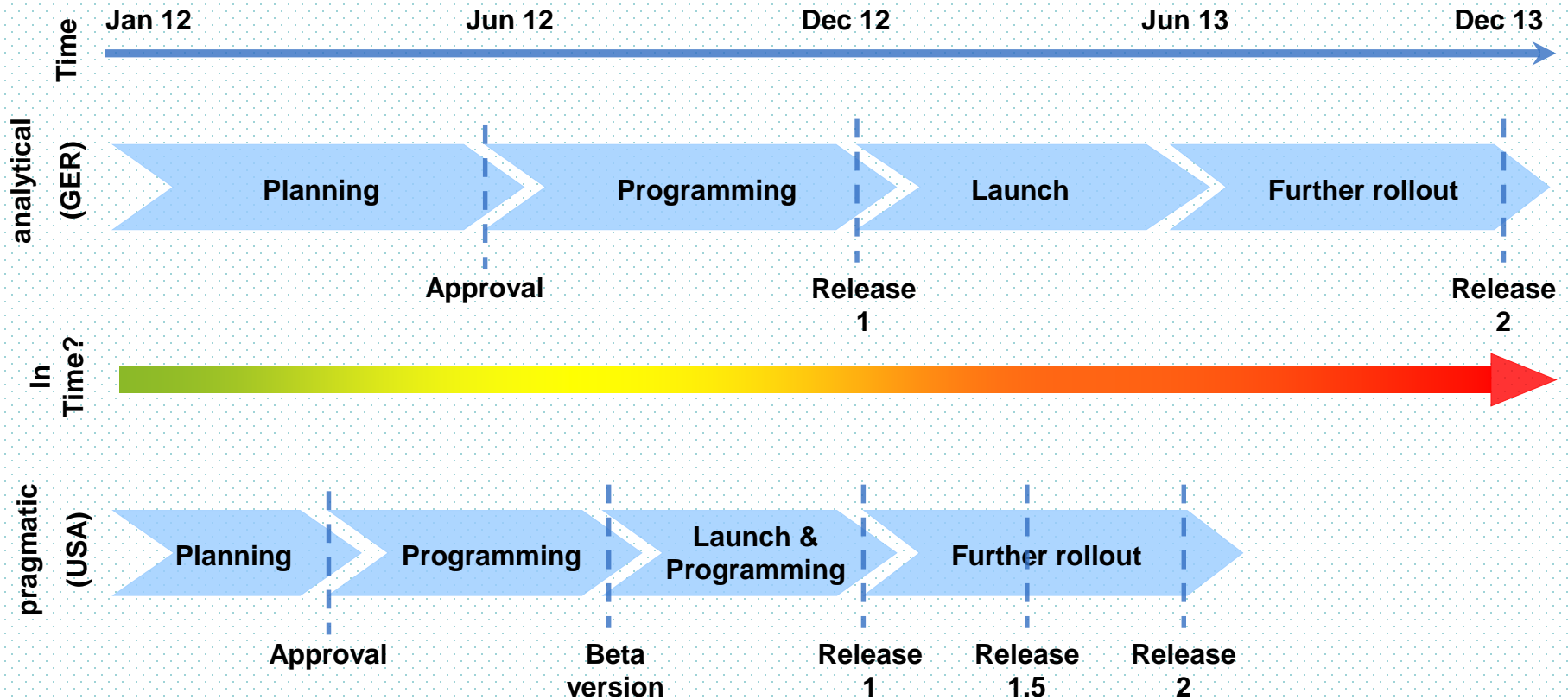


Recommendation to develop intercultural competence

Skill / Experience	technician	International project manager	Management
Work/living experience abroad			
Work in international teams/company			
Ability to accommodate			
Interest in foreign culture			
Awareness for cultural divergence			
English			

increase with responsibility

Recommendation for project management: Make use of best cultural approach



Find right balance between time to market and high quality solution

Recommendation: Promote intercultural exchange

Give business experts and young managers more opportunities to acquire intercultural communication skills on **practical assignments abroad** for a duration of at least 2 months.

Assignment allows candidate and management to better evaluate his/her capabilities as potential leader and to improve the candidate's **preparation for future management assignment**

Develop an international **trainee programme** for graduates featuring 1 or 2 assignments abroad for a duration of 3 to 6 months.

Allow for **greater cultural diversity** on all levels of responsibility in **Germany** (particularly in corporate and Management staff)

Thank you very much for your attention!

TH International GmbH Consulting & Support

Thomas Hinrichsen, CEO
Ettighofferstraße 78
D-53123 Bonn
Germany
www.thi-cs.de
support@thi-cs.de